FARM AUTOMATION

Mechanized farm practices designed to reduce labor requirements.

Status:

Agricultural economics increasingly dictates a need for farm consolidation and increased mechanization (reduced labor.)

Likely Scenario:

Increased automation will be necessary to maintain the profitability of tobacco farming. Automated mechanical harvesting is likely to increase the quantity of poorly graded or mixed tobacco offered for auction. Thus PM would loose some of its capability to purchase well graded (by stalk position) tobacco. This may reduce our control of blend components for cigarette making.

Alternate Scenario:

Poorly designed or applied automated equipment could result in a general reduction in tobacco quality.

R&D Response:

We are currently working in a cooperative program with state and federal tobacco researchers and extension personnel to keep them aware of the need for quality, well graded tobaccos.

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